

What is claimed is:

1. A method for operating a camshaft adjusting device, using an actuating drive the actual setting of a camshaft with respect to the rotation of the crankshaft being made to follow corresponding to a setpoint setting ascertained in a control unit, and if there is a system deviation between the actual setting and the setpoint setting, a fault signal is formed in multiple stages as a function of the system deviation (DP), different weightings being imputed to the individual stages of the fault indication (F1, F2).
2. The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein information of the driver concerning the occurrence of a fault takes place as a function of the stage of the fault indication (F1, F2).
3. The method as recited in one of Claims 1 or 2, wherein a stage of greater weighting is reached with increasing system deviation (DP).
4. The method as recited in one of the preceding claims, wherein a fault indication (F2) perceptible by the driver is generated at the latest when the stage having the greatest weighting is reached.
5. The method as recited in one of the preceding claims, wherein fault indications (F1, F2), perceptible by the driver, that are different from each other, are generated as a function of the stage of the weighting, a fault indication (F2), that prompts the immediate searching out of a repair shop, being generated at the latest when the stage having the greatest weighting is reached.
6. The method as recited in one of the preceding claims, wherein at least one stage exists in which a fault indication (F1) is generated that is stored in a fault memory in a way in which it can be read out, but is not perceptible to the driver during driving operation.
7. A vehicle having a camshaft adjusting device to which a control unit is assigned, the control unit (13) having a computer (14) to which a memory

device (15) is assigned,

wherein in the memory device (15), a program is stored that may be executed on the computer (14), for carrying out a method according to one of the preceding claims.

8. A memory device having a program stored on it that is able to be executed on a computer, such as a microprocessor, for carrying out a method according to Claims 1 through 6.